

ICPS newsletter

ICPS studies problems of reforming science and education

The greatest obstacle to reforms in Ukraine is the lack of new knowledge and skills. The Soviet system created a solid educational infrastructure. However, development of a market economy and democratic society demand new approaches to science and education. The International Centre for Policy Studies contributes to the transformation of science and education in Ukraine by promoting the capacity of the government to work together with the public on developing and implementing education and research policy. The summary findings of policy research in the sphere of scholarship and education, recently released by ICPS, are presented below

Research on strategic directions for reforming science and education in Ukraine

~ a project conducted with the financial support of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

In the Soviet Union, the goals of official science were subject to the interests of the Communist regime, i.e., to its main aims of ensuring a military advantage over the West and exercising ideological control over society. Thus, even the objectives of research and development work were determined according to these aims. Many sectors of intellectual activity—policy analysis, research on management issues, scholarship, and economic research—either did not exist or were entirely closed to public scrutiny.

Today, the transition economies, which are focused on EU integration, have given up the education and research model designed by the totalitarian regime. Above all, they have reoriented their objectives regarding academic research towards developing democratic society and human capital, as well as technical innovation and infrastructures in the framework of preparing for EU accession. In contrast, Ukraine has not reformed its research sphere yet. This deprives the country of its prospects for European integration.

ICPS's recent research on a strategy for reforming science and education in Ukraine had the following objectives:

- initiate systemic changes regarding policymaking in the sphere of science and education by providing new procedures for drafting and taking decisions in the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine;
- present methods of policy analysis and procedures for policy drafting and policymaking used in developed democracies.

Project participants attempted to determine the answers to the following questions:

1. Why do Ukrainian education and science lack the capacity to positively influence the social transformation processes?

Ukraine's existing system of education and science management has not been able to respond to the changes of the past decade. While the forces that once gave rise to the Soviet style of science organisation have long since become history, the institutions serving this organisation type themselves remain virtually unchanged. Such changes as have occurred have been the result only of random responses to changing social demands and international experience.

As before, in Ukraine science and education are still viewed as two separate sectors of a planned economy. Their operation, on the state policy as well as departmental program levels, is not co-ordinated with the development of other sectors or of society as a whole. This hampers innovative development, which otherwise could be possible through non-governmental funding of science and education.

2. Why does Ukraine have no societal transformation strategy? What can education and science do to change the situation?

Ukraine has no experience in long-term development planning. The lack of public vision of Ukraine's future is a threat to reforms, and to the nation's very existence.

The best way to deal with this problem is to create government capacity to make policy decisions within a co-ordinated strategy of social transformation. In recent years, other transition economies widely use a concept of learning organisation and learning government.

Next week

Developing a state debt policy.

The International Centre for Policy Studies will host an expert discussion on "Developing a State Debt Policy" on 12 April 2001. In preparing a special chapter for its *Quarterly Predictions* journal on this topic, ICPS economists will take into account ideas expressed during the discussion.

Currently, the challenge of the Ukrainian government is to develop a coherent state debt policy. Ukraine has already come through a period of poorly controlled loans for financing the budget deficit. Today, debt management should become one of the tools of economic policy focused on ensuring sustainable growth.

Meeting participants will discuss the following issues:

- What are the goals of a state debt policy? How does state debt affect macroeconomic processes?
- What measures does the Ukrainian government implement in the sphere of debt management? What consequences do these measures have?
- What debt strategy options have been already developed? What are the interested groups in the process? What are their interests?
- What are the ways to establish coordination between the government and the National Bank of Ukraine for developing and implementing a debt policy?

*For an invitation to the seminar, please contact Andrii Bega
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The concept of a learning society attempts to adjust different visions of social transformation during Ukraine's transition from totalitarianism to democracy. It is through learning that the post-Soviet nations must achieve their goal of building an open society. Forming a learning society to support the transformation requires appropriate research and analytic work, as well as changes in the content and organisation of the Ukrainian education and science systems. This concept is in accord with the idea of innovative social development.

The goal of creating a learning society brings forth the following objectives for research and development work and education:

- continually setting and adjusting the goals of science and education development in

the context of social transformation priorities;

- working out and implementing a strategy of innovative development;
- developing models of managing change and plans of interaction between science, education, and innovative development;
- organising public consultations and public discussions of the strategy;
- creating a regulatory environment for markets of educational and intellectual services.

3. How to work out a strategy for developing science and education and what must be the role of the Ministry of Education and Science in this process?

The Ministry of Education and Science should initiate the creation of a communicative strategy of Ukraine's innovative development through

establishing a learning society. The objective of this strategy is to establish systems for analysing and adjusting different interests, through the introduction of democratic procedures for public discussions and of new standards for preparing draft government decisions.

The alternative option for managing change is the administrative model. If the administrative model is chosen, the government will produce decisions that will not go through public discussion, and thus they may incite opposition on the part of different interest groups. Communication used to explain the decisions after they are made would not be enough to ensure implementation of a policy, as the described model does not envision a survey of public opinion and does not take account of the various interests.

Assessing the effectiveness of implementing R&D findings

~ a project conducted with the financial support of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine

Ukraine is still shifting from closed allocation of budget funds for research, conducted by different ministries and state agencies, to an effective scheme of using limited social resources.

The way of innovation development declared by Ukraine requires creating a new system of research, with coherent goals and forms of organisation, on the basis of available potential. In order to carry out this task, a research policy and mechanisms for its implementation should be developed.

The effectiveness of research must be measured by how it supports social transformation. ICPS experts have determined several main features of research effectiveness. They are the following:

1. Assessing the effectiveness of social change. When measuring how effective research is in supporting change, the following must be assessed: the effectiveness of the intellectual support of reforms, and the overall impact of science on transformation.

2. Assessing the effectiveness of research supporting the achievement of transformation priorities. This must be measured by how the research helps to deal with the problems of concrete sectors in the context of the nation's strategic priorities, which include strengthening the competitiveness of the economy and reforming the education and science sectors. There general principles of organising research and development work are:

- each type of research must have a clearly defined area of application;
- different types of research and development work must have different corresponding criteria. On the basis of these criteria ministries and state agencies assess research effectiveness;
- different types of research and development work must have different funding procedures.

Given the wide variety of those who use research products and participate in policymaking, sectoral and professional effectiveness assessments alone are not sufficient. This calls for procedures to adjust the assessments of different groups of experts.

Developing and introduction of market mechanisms for forming scientific research tasks for the Ministry of Economy

~ a project conducted with the financial support of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine

The goal of the project was to improve the effectiveness of the use of budget funds allocated for research projects in the Ministry of Economy.

In recent years, organisation of research conducted for the Ministry of Economy have been characterised by a lack of funds, outdated research standards, and the absence of a transparent procedure for awarding contracts that would be acceptable to all.

ICPS experts developed the following recommendations on introducing market mechanisms for commissioning research for the Ministry of Economy:

• **improving research funding.** Budget funds allocated for conducting research for the Ministry of Economy should be divided into several flows. One flow should be used to create such infrastructures as the ministry needs to ensure a high quality of research. The purpose of the other flows would be to fund specific projects;

• **new research standards to ensure higher quality.** Since all research conducted for the Ministry of Economy must support the adoption or implementation of government decisions, their results must be in keeping with policy document standards. Procedures of organising and conducting research, as well as the criteria for measuring results,

must change to meet the product requirements;

• **introducing an on-the-job retraining system for research staff.** It is recommended to create conditions for on-the-job retraining for public policy analysts and think tanks;

• **switching to a system of continuous consultations when working out assignments for research to be done for the Ministry.** Research for the Ministry should be organised as analytical support of economic reforms. Research plans and program should be developed in the process of communication between the government and the Ministry's departments, the public, business, and political parties. ■

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